Opportunity Junction earns chairman's award Antnioch/Brentwood Press Feb. 13, 2009

Opportunity Junction, a nonprofit organization serving Contra Costa County, was the recipient of this year's Chairman of the Board Award, an honor conferred annually on an unheralded individual or organization making a positive impact in the community. Traditionally, that individual or organization is chosen by the outgoing chairman of the Board of Supervisors. This year's outgoing chair is District V Supervisor Federal Glover.

"I've supported Opportunity Junction from the beginning, when it was OPTIC," said Glover. "It has gotten to the point where East County employers are now seeking graduates of Opportunity Junction because they know that they will have the skills and work ethic to be a valued employee."

Accepting the award was Executive Director of Opportunity Junction Alissa Friedman. "We are particularly honored to be presented this award by Supervisor Glover, who knows our programs so intimately as an employer of one our graduates," she said.

Opportunity Junction fights poverty by helping low-income adults gain the skills and confidence to support themselves and their families. The organization combines technology training, literacy education and personal development with real-world experience to put people on the road to economic self-sufficiency. Founded in late 1999 by a consortium of community-based organizations, local government agencies and private businesses, Opportunity Junction was established as a direct response to three emerging needs: a local economy lacking technology-proficient, entry-level workers; federal welfare reform that tends to fast-track individuals into low-wage jobs that perpetuated the cycle of poverty; and significant pockets of poverty in Eastern Contra Costa County that were underserved.

Nine years later, the organization's workforce development program remains the only career-track training program that targets hard-to-serve adult populations in Eastern Contra Costa County.